



ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

News Release

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SCHOOL CHILDREN TAUGHT “GREEN” LESSONS FOR LIFE AT CITY’S ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES HEADQUARTERS

SAN DIEGO, CA — More than 500 City of San Diego children from eight elementary schools learned to care for the environment during the sixth annual “EnviroSchool,” a hands-on interactive workshop held March 24-28, 2003 and hosted by the City’s Environmental Services Department (ESD).

Attending EnviroSchool were students from the Kate Sessions (Pacific Beach), Chesterton (Linda Vista), Nestor (Otay Mesa) and Cabrillo (Pacific Beach) elementary schools; the St. Michael (Paradise Hills), San Diego Jewish (Carmel Valley) and Grace Lutheran (Hillcrest) academies, and Our Lady of the Sacred Heart School (City Heights). The week-long workshop was held at the City’s Ridgehaven “Green” Building Demonstration Project, headquarters to the Environmental Services Department.

“EnviroSchool gives children an opportunity to discover the wonders of the environment through exploratory lessons,” said Richard L. Hays, director of Environmental Services Department. “Environmental lessons are many times not offered in school curriculum and we wanted to offer information that otherwise children may not have access to. At ESD we promote our recycling and environmental programs everyday primarily to adults but the reality is we’re only doing half our job if we don’t reach children and help shape their understanding of the environment.”

During EnviroSchool, held each day from 9 a.m. to noon, approximately 100 fourth- and fifth-grade students participated in the following three structured learning activities:

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--**The Splash Van:** A mobile science lab featuring five different stations where kids use computers, microscopes, chemistry experiments and living creatures to learn about water quality and insect life. The lab teaches students the connection between human activities and the health of the environment.

--**The Green Machine:** An interactive exploration program that teaches agricultural awareness at three stations: a soils research station (with live earthworms), the water cycle station (with dramatic role-playing scenarios and costumes), and integrated pest management station (with interactive role play and insect puppets). Both the Green Machine and the Splash Van are operated by the San Diego County Office of Education.

--**Waste Reduction & Recycling Presentation and the Recycling Relay:** A hands-on presentation with displays of items made with recycled materials that teach students the importance of waste prevention, reducing, reusing, composting, and recycling followed by a high-energy recycling race where the environment is the winner.

"We designed the lessons to be hands-on and interactive because we believe children learn best through experience," said Hays. "We also think education should be fun and our department mascot "Can Man" helps add that spark by encouraging the kids to learn about recycling and offering our Trashbuster Badges as rewards for learning."

Since 1998, ESD has hosted EnviroSchool programs at the Ridgehaven "Green Building," one of the City's most energy-efficient facilities. Approximately 3,000 school children of all ages have completed the program's educational lessons.

The City of San Diego's Environmental Services Department is charged with refuse collection and disposal, recycling and environmentally-sound landfill management to meet the City's long-term disposal needs. The Department also oversees the City's management of energy use and explores innovative options for energy independence. For more information about the City's EnviroSchool Program, please call the Environmental Services Department at (858) 694-7000 or visit the website at <http://www.sandiego.gov/environmental-services/>.

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